

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6325

INFO AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK

SUBJ: CONFRONTATION POLITICS IN NWFP

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM CONSUL IN PESHAWAR:

1. RENEWED POLITICAL BATTLE BETWEEN BHUTTO GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY HAS REACHED SUCH LEVEL OF INTENSITY THAT MOST OF CONSULATE'S CONTACTS NOW REGARD IT AS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT SETTLEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING WILL EVER BE REACHED BETWEEN BHUTTO AND WALI KHAN. PREVALENT FEELING OF REGRET THAT PRIMIN HAS AGAIN CHOSEN TO GO ON WARPATH AGAINST NAP WITH POLICY OF MASS ARRESTS. MANY INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS BELIEVE ALSO THAT PRIMIN HAS BEEN TAKING RISKS WITH HIS ANTI-AFGHAN CAMPAIGN AND MAY SOON BE FACED WITH SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH AFGHANISTAN IF HE DOES NOT MODIFY HIS ANTI-DAUD STANCE.

2. GOVERNMENT HAS JUSTIFIED ARREST OF SCORES OF NAP LEADERS - INCLUDING THREE MPAS - ON GROUNDS THEY HAVE BEEN CONSPIRING WITH AFGHAN CONSUL IN PESHAWAR AND WERE

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RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIES OF BOMB BLASTS WHICH HAVE BEEN

CONSTANT FEATURE OF FRONTIER LIFE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. TO WHAT EXTENT NAP MEMBERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THESE EXPLOSIONS IS STILL MYSTERY TO MOST PESHAWAR RESIDENTS. WHILE CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN CONTINUE TO MAKE DAILY ASSERTIONS BOMBS WERE PLANTED BY MEMBERS OF NAP, MANY PEOPLE HARBOR SUSPICION GOVERNMENT ITSELF PLANTED BOMBS IN EFFORT TO IMPLICATE WALI KHAN'S PARTY. GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS, FOR EXAMPLE, TO LINK MPA TAJ MOHAMMAD, RESPECTED LANDOWNER AND BUSINESSMAN FROM NOWSHERA, WITH BOMB EXPLOSIONS SEEN AS HAVING BEEN CARRIED OUT IN PARTICULARLY CLUMSY MANNER AND IT WIDELY BELIEVED IN PESHAWAR THAT THE TWELVE BOMBS FOUND IN HIS GUEST HOUSE WERE PLACED THERE BY AGENT OF GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: OBSERVERS IN FRONTIER BELIEVE THAT A MAIN PURPOSE OF ANTI-NAP AND ANTI-AFGHAN CAMPAIGN IS TO STRENGTHEN PPP POSITION IN PUNJAB. TO EXTENT, HOWEVER, THAT CAMPAIGN HAS ALSO BEEN AIMED AT REDUCING INFLUENCE OF NAP IN NWFP AND WINNINGSUPPORT THERE FOR PPP, CONSULATE BELIEVES THAT THUS FAR IT HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. BHUTTO'S CONSTANT ATTACKS ON WALI KHAN DURING HIS TOURS OF NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN APPEAR, ON BALANCE, TO HAVE INCREASED SYMPATHY FOR AND ENHANCED PRESTIGE OF NAP CHIEF.
BYROADE

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